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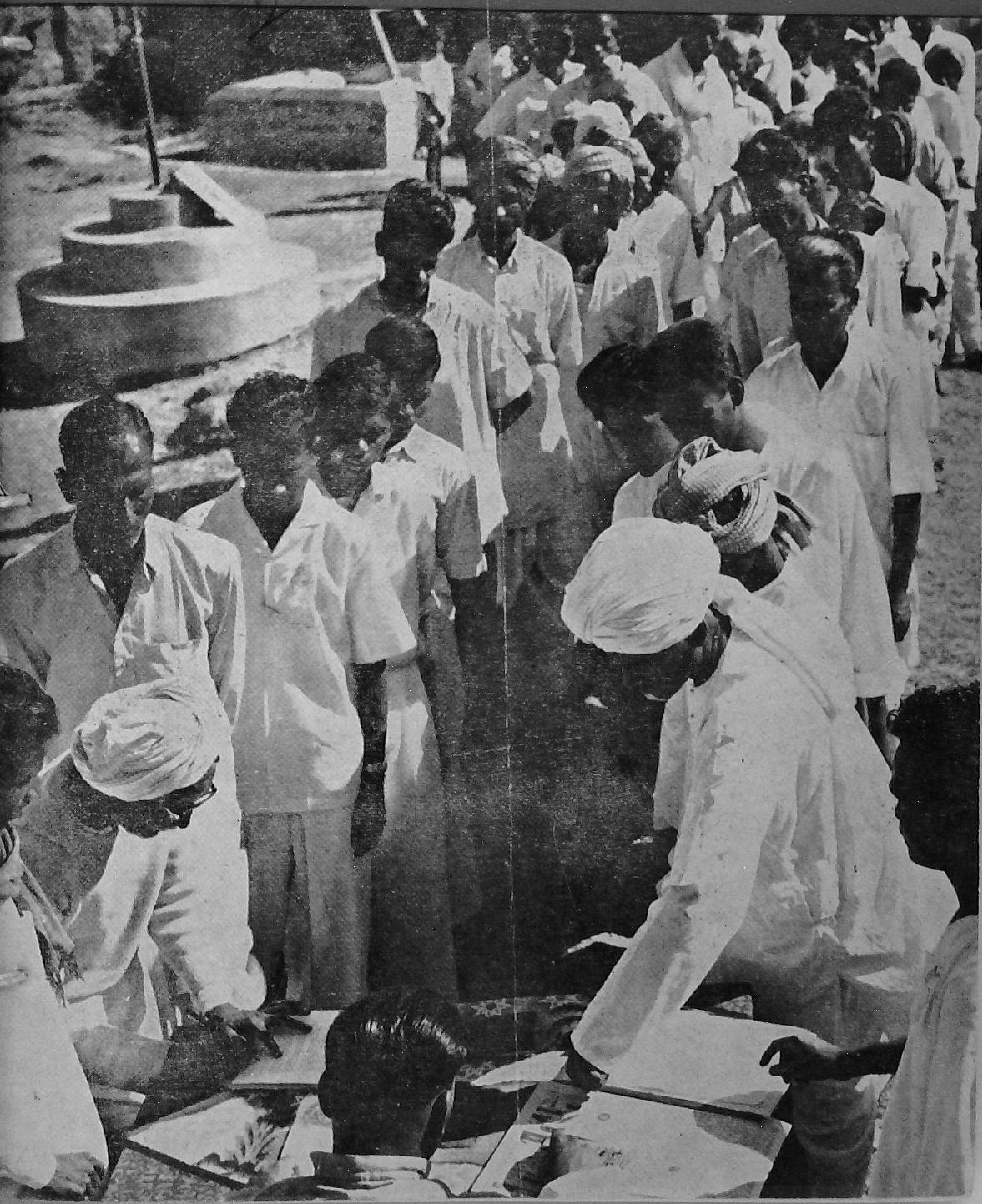

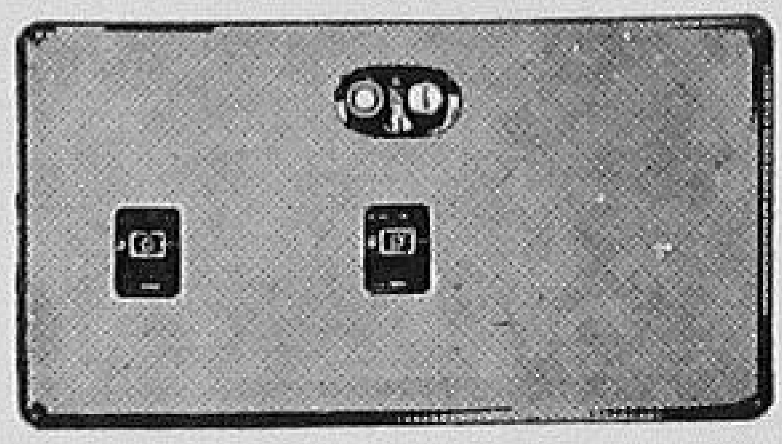

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EDITOR : A. P. SHOME

COVER STORY

IN RESPONSE TO THE CALL OF THE UNION MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION THE VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE HAS BEEN REVITALISED ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THE COVER PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS VILLAGERS TAKING THE OATH AS MEMBERS OF THE V.V.F.

(*See inside*)

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A NATION AROUSED

C. D. & C. Ministry's Call

For the second time in three years the nation is in peril and an aggressor has challenged our very existence and our freedom. We have been called upon to defend ourselves against "a regime which does not believe in freedom, democracy and peace", and to meet the threat that it poses to our freedom and our national integrity. In a similar situation almost three years ago the Village Volunteer Force was formed to mobilise the people of the vast rural areas in the country to face the challenge of an invader. Today, the call has once again gone out to all the States to reactivise the Village Volunteer Force so that the people in the rural areas can actively participate in the massive defence effort that the present situation calls for. We reproduce below the suggestions made by the Union Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation to the State Governments for this purpose.—**Editor**

Following the intensification of Pakistani aggression against India, the Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has asked the State Governments to mobilise the rural areas for the defence effort. The Ministry, in a communication to the State Governments, has emphasised the need for ceaseless vigilance to maintain morale, scotch rumours and thwart any possible attempt at sabotage. It has said that the people must be made fully aware of the issues at stake and their obligations. Every one must act in unison and harmony. The Ministry has pointed out that considerable organisations and personnel of the Village Volunteer Force, which was constituted on a countrywide basis following Chinese aggression about three years ago, exist in the States and Union Territories. There are also other local formations like the Home Guards and Information and Publicity Units. In the context of the present situation, several State Governments have taken steps to augment and strengthen these organised local groups. It is essential that the Village Volunteer Force is now fully geared to undertake the tasks of mass education and local defence in the villages. The Village Volunteer Force must work in full coordination with the other agencies operating at the local levels. The Ministry has suggested the immediate implementation of a two-fold programme in respect of the Village Volunteer Force, *viz.*, local defence and mass education. The imparting of appropriate training follows as a corollary.

LOCAL DEFENCE

To generate and maintain participation in the defence effort, it is necessary to specify clear cut tasks for members of the Village Volunteer Force. It has been suggested that the members of the Village Volunteer Force should :—

(i) aid the police in the matter of internal security, watch and ward, patrolling and guarding, etc.;

(ii) function as an emergency labour force for assisting armed forces, police and any other agencies responsible for the maintenance of communications and essential services;

(iii) convey timely information to the proper authorities about local events and occurrences of significance;

(iv) exercise special vigilance against possible sabotage by enemy infiltrators and paratroopers, help in apprehending them, and report to the authorities immediately about the movements of any suspicious characters; and

(v) on being called upon to do so, when members of higher auxiliary formations move up on regular duty in more advanced areas, be in a position to replace them locally in the discharge of their functions; a second line of leadership should also be built up to relieve the Dalpatis and Updalpatis in the event of their being called up for regular duty.

Close liaison should be maintained between the Village Volunteer Force organisation and the military, para-military, and information and other civilian units, where they exist, at the appropriate levels.

MASS EDUCATION

The importance of organised and purposive publicity in disseminating correct information about the situation, counteracting unfounded rumours and explaining to the villagers their role has also been emphasised. The various media of mass communication, it has been pointed out, should be fully pressed into service. The following lines of action have been suggested by the Ministry :—

(i) Planned, purposeful and imaginative publicity in the rural areas should be further intensified.

(ii) Community listening sets under the scheme of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, should, as far as possible, be provided in each Panchayat; effective arrangements should also be made for their maintenance. Where community sets are not available, endeavour should be made to utilise the private sets.

(iii) Members of the Village Volunteer Force should actively participate in the radio rural forums and lead the discussions.

(iv) Members of the Village Volunteer Force should similarly take special interest in popularising folk art performances having a bearing on the present situation; they should strive to secure wider audiences and also help in raising local talent for such activities.

The success of any massive scheme of mobilisation for the defence effort, the Ministry has said, depends to a large extent, on the effectiveness, intensity and appropriateness of the training given to those who are to initiate and guide the scheme and those who are to work it. The States have been asked to keep the following suggestions in mind :

(i) Training provided for civilians in the use of arms should, where this is not so, make it a special point to cover the Dalpatis of the Village Volunteer Force. Even where the training is not yet with arms, as in the case of some of the Home Guards formations, the Dalpatis should still be fully covered.

(ii) Each Dalpati should have, for every village under his charge, a similarly trained Updalpati.

(iii) Dalpatis and Updalpatis should be encouraged to join the rural Home Guards and other auxiliary forces. Their liability as home guards or members of a regularly constituted auxiliary force would, however, have precedence over the requirements of local village defence.

(iv) The training, in turn, of the other members of the Village Volunteer Force by the Dalpatis and Updalpatis should be systematically pursued; selected volunteers should also be given training in the use of arms under the existing programmes.

(v) Members of the Village Volunteer Force have been provided with their own distinctive badges; Dalpatis have also been provided with uniforms in some areas. In special areas, all Dalpatis and Updalpatis should, as far as possible, be provided with uniforms, unless in any area this is considered not desirable.

I am confident that the people of this country who have given proof of their patriotism and common sense on so many occasions in the past will stand united as one man to defend their country. **—Lal Bahadur**

Village Volunteer Force

Where We stand.
We have believed in peace.
We have believed, all quarrels must be resolved with reason and goodwill.
But a war has been thrust on us.

* * *

Our Jawans are fighting on the wide front.
They are on a ceaseless vigil.
In the grim struggle, they are sustained by a faith.
Faith in the justness of the cause.
Faith in the people whose freedom they defend as a trust.
Rural India houses eighty per cent of India's citizens.
How does rural India help in this crisis?
The answer is the Village Volunteer Force.

* * *

Village Volunteer Force should take charge of local defence.
Village Volunteer Force should

Help the Police in
- Internal Security
- Watch and Ward
- Patrolling and Guarding

Help in maintaining
- Communications
- Essential Services

Help in vigilance against
- Rumours
- Suspicious characters
- Attempts at Sabotage

Help in mass education by use of
- Community Listening Sets
- Radio Rural Forums
- Other Publicity programmes

Fundamental to all this is Training
Members must
- Join the Rural Home Guards
- Under rifle and other Training available

* * *

The tasks must be understood
The tasks must be done
The cause shall triumph.

We have before us a great struggle. Whether the fighting on our frontier goes on or not, this struggle is with us, and we have all to do our utmost to help in this struggle. **—Jawaharlal Nehru**

BALVANTRAI GOPALJI MEHTA

Architect of Panchayati Raj Dead

As we go to Press news has come in of the tragic death of Shri Balvantrai Gopalji Mehta, Chief Minister of Gujarat. Shri Mehta died on September 19, 1965—the third anniversary of his becoming Chief Minister—when his plane was shot down by a Pakistani aircraft, 80 miles from Bhuj. His wife, Shrimati Sarojben, and five other occupants of the aircraft also lost their lives.

The Minister, Deputy Minister, and members of the staff of the Union Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation, with whose work Shri Mehta was intimately connected for a number of years, have expressed profound sorrow and regret at the tragic death of Shri Mehta and his wife. A resolution passed at a condolence meeting says: "Shri Mehta's services to the country were manifold. But it will be as the architect of Panchayati Raj that a grateful nation will remember him most. The report of the Study Team on Community Development, which he headed, bore ample testimony, if ever one was needed, to the implicit confidence which he placed in the capacity and good sense of the common people. It was this report which laid the foundation for a countrywide network of self-governing institutions, through which our cherished ideals of secular democracy could infuse the life of every citizen.

"The services of Shri Mehta to the cause of democratic decentralisation did not stop with the report of the Study Team. Even while shouldering the onerous burden cast upon him as Chief Minister of Gujarat, he found time to spare to serve as the Chairman of the Committee of the Consultative Council of Panchayati Raj. In this capacity, he was seeking further ways to carry forward the process of decentralisation of power and consolidating the system as the base of our democracy. The sudden death of Shri Mehta has left a void, which is difficult to fill."

Born on February 19, 1899, Shri Mehta graduated from Bombay University when the first non-cooperation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi was in full swing. Leaving his studies, he plunged into the movement. Shri Mehta started his public life in 1920, when he became the organising secretary of the Railway Servants' Union of Bhavnagar. In 1927, Shri Mehta joined the Servants of the People's Society and also founded the Harijan Ashram at Bhavnagar.

His greatest contribution in pre-Independence India was in the sphere of the States people's fight for self-rule. For years he was secretary of the All-India States People's Conference, of which he later became vice-president. A leader of the Praja Parishad of Bhavnagar, he negotiated for responsible self-government. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly of that State and became the leader of the opposition. The Assembly was boycotted and once again when responsible self-government was restored, he was elected leader and became the Chief Minister of the State.

When the State of Saurashtra was formed, he was the Deputy Chief Minister from February, 1948, to September, 1950. He was elected to the Gujarat Legislative Assembly in 1963, and on September 19, he became Chief Minister of the State.

The Call of the Hour

We are members of one family
We stand united to serve the motherland
We shall defend her with our sweat and blood
A war has been thrust on us
A war against our democracy
The cause shall triumph

MOBILISE VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE
Telegram to State Ministers

CHALLENGE ON US TO VINDICATE STRENGTH OF PANCHAYATI RAJ IN THE BATTLE OF OUR DEMOCRACY PITTED AGAINST RUTHLESS DICTATORSHIP. MOBILISE VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE THROUGHOUT STATE TO STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN UNITY, SOLIDARITY, HARMONY; TO TAKE CHARGE OF VILLAGE DEFENCE AGAINST POSSIBLE SABOTAGE, INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL, OF COMMUNICATIONS OR OTHER FACILITIES; TO DISSEMINATE CORRECT INFORMATION ABOUT HAPPENINGS; TO COUNTERACT RUMOURS AND PREVENT WASTE IN ANY FORM. OUR ARMY GRIPPED IN THIS BATTLE OF "KURUKSHETRA" NEED THIS VITAL SOUL FORCE OF INDIA PULSING IN THEIR VEINS AS MUCH AS THE STEEL GALVANISING THEIR MUSCLES. GOD BLESS THE EFFORTS.—**S. K. DEY**

PROSPERITY THROUGH SELF-HELP

Kachana Shows the Way

SELF-HELP, UNITY and correct leadership have in no time lifted the face of a tiny village Kachana in Dharsiwa Block, about seven miles from Raipur in Madhya Pradesh. Alert and alive to their own responsibility, the inhabitants do not hesitate to toil to meet their needs and to solve their problems. Last year the villagers of Kachana hit the headlines when they constructed an earthen dam on a nullah through shramdan in a record time of two days. Over 800 villagers—young and old, men and women—voluntarily contributed labour to build this vital dam. It was their third attempt to have this dam. They had constructed an earthen dam in 1960 over the nullah to get their fields irrigated. But the dam was later washed away due to heavy rains. Again in 1963 they tried in vain to have the dam. But the year 1964 gave them success. The villagers of Kachana now intend to raise the dam still higher through shramdan and also lay boulders and provide sluice gates. The voluntary labour has saved about Rs. 6,000 for the villagers which they would have to spend for the construction of the dam.

The dam has enabled the villagers not only to irrigate most of the land but also to raise production of vegetables and sugarcane. Moreover, it has also helped them grow paddy in those fields where cultivation of this crop was not possible previously.

This progressive village has a population of 1,850 with an area of 1,854 acres out of which 1,400 acres are under cultivation. Most of the land is irrigated by canal water. Other source of irrigation is village tank. There are in all nine tanks in the village.

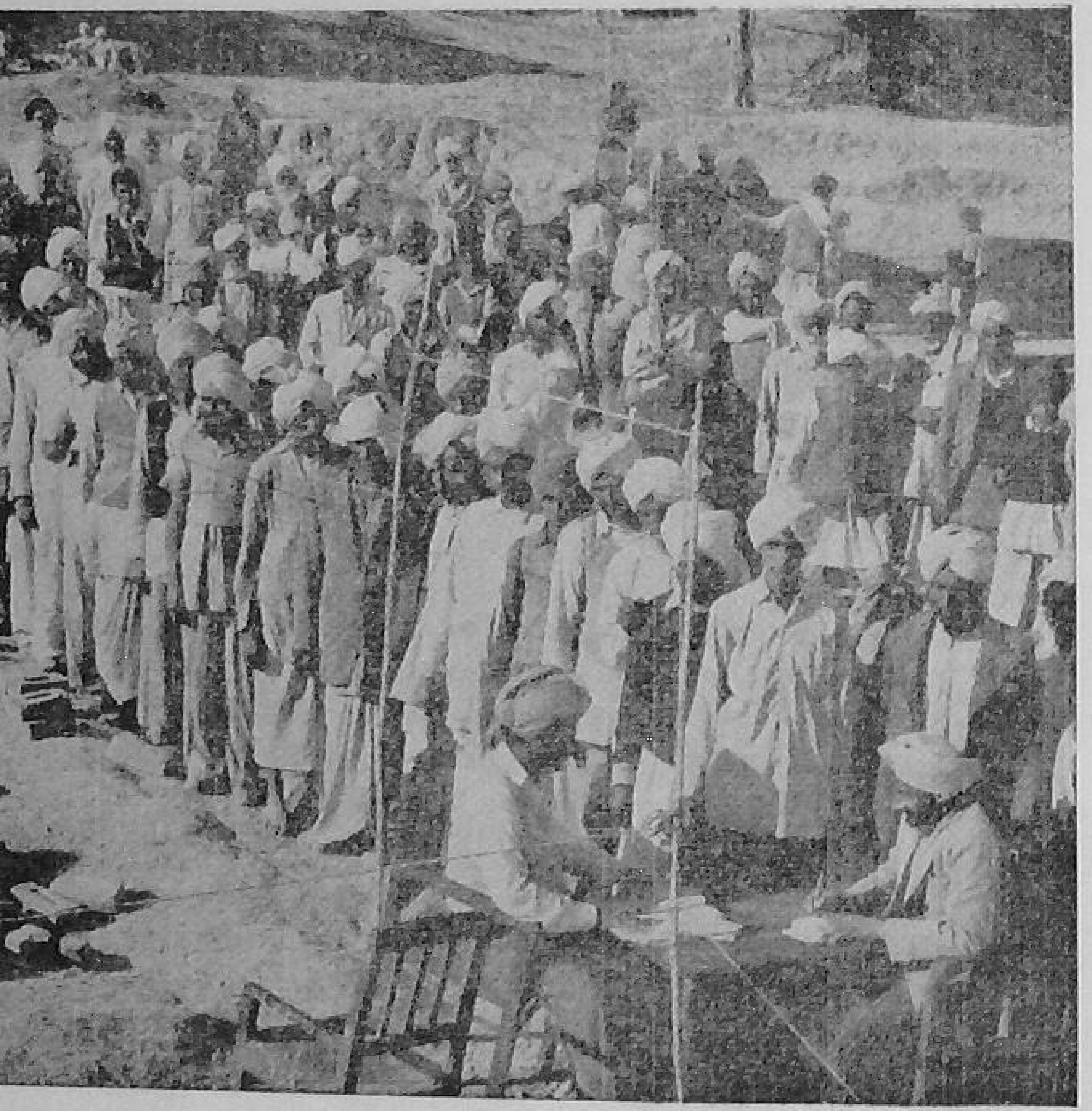
The construction of the dam is not the only instance where the villagers have come forward to do shramdan. They have repaired five-mile approach road through shramdan and also dug seventy-five compost pits.

Kachana has set another noble example before its counterparts all over the country. There is unity in the village which is evident from the recent Panchayat elections. There were no contests. All Panches were elected unanimously. Kachana is a Gram Sabha Centre. There are 14 wards in the village. Sarpanch, Upsarpanch and a woman Panch were also elected without any contest. Their unity has impressed other nearby villages too.

The villagers are fortunate in having a leader like Shri Daluram Sahu who is the Sarpanch of the Gram Sabha. Because of his able leadership contests in elections were avoided. Under the able guidance of Shri Sahu, who himself is a progressive cultivator, the village cultivators have unanimously decided to adopt the second stage of the Package Programme from the ensuing season. This would help increase the agricultural production manifold.

The village is progressive in other fields also. A scheme for constructing a *Ramkothi* has been prepared for which cultivators have promised to give 160 maunds of paddy. This would help supplying needy cultivators paddy seed in time. There are a Village Volunteer Force unit, two bhajan mandalis, a drama party and a *Ramlila* party in the village. The Panchayat has decided to construct an office building, to start pisciculture in local tanks and to repair school building and also to encourage poultry farming. Thus Kachana village is making rapid progress in agriculture and other fields of development through the initiative and efforts of the people themselves.

(*Courtesy* : *Gram Sudhar*)



The voters queue at a polling booth during the last Panchayat elections in Punjab.

Panchayati Raj in Punjab

S. GURMEET SINGH

THE SCHEME of Panchayati Raj which was introduced in Punjab from October 2, 1961, and which aimed at induction of democracy at the grassroots, was a natural corollary to the politico-economic system we had chosen for ourselves.

The scheme was integrated with the Community Development movement to raise the living standards of people and make them conscious of their rights and obligations under a democratic set-up.

It is somewhat heartening to note that ever since the introduction of Panchayati Raj in the State, the people have been evincing greater interest in developmental programmes and public participation in them is forthcoming in increasing measure.

There are at present 13,452 Panchayats, 227 Panchayat Samitis and 18 Zila Parishads in the State. For the development of Panchayats, the State's Third Plan had a provision of Rs. 112.40 lakhs in addition to Rs. 27.60 lakhs as Central assistance and Rs. 2.75 lakhs as Punjab's own contribution. Due to national emergency, however, some of the schemes were deferred or curtailed, and it is expected that expenditure on this account will be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 48.01 lakhs by the end of the Plan. The important items implemented so far include completion of Panchayat Bhawan building at Chandigarh, grant of interest free loans of Rs. 21.82 lakhs to about 70 Panchayats against their revenue earning schemes, training of Panchayat Secretaries and con-

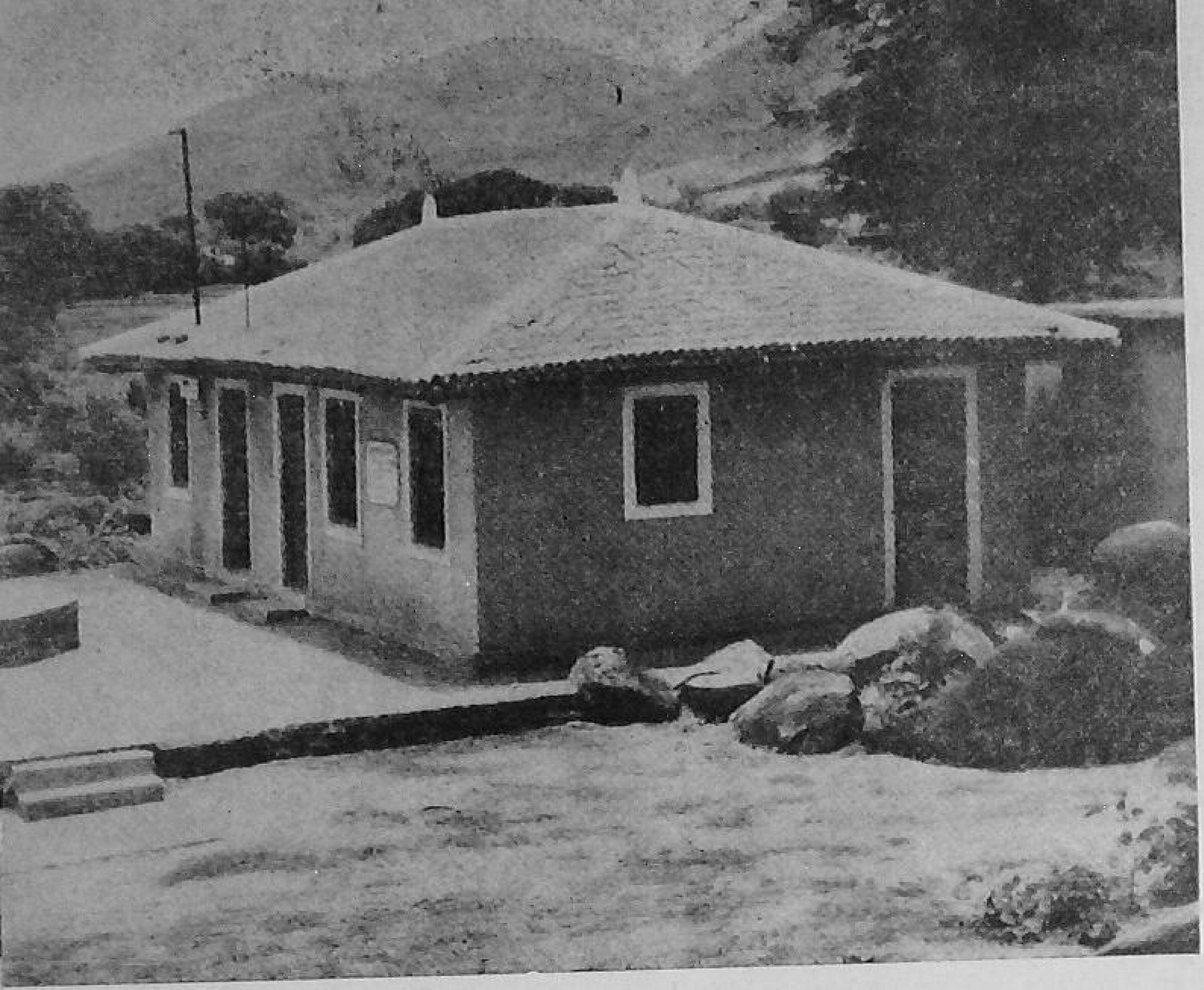
struction of offices of Panchayat Samitis, etc. During the last year a sum of Rs. 4.50 lakhs was advanced as interest-free loans for developing irrigation on *Shamlat* land. The total area vested in Panchayats under the Panchayat Village Common Lands Regulation Act, 1961 at the present moment stands at 15,60,186 acres from which the Panchayats derive approximately an income of Rs. 68 lakhs which will be utilised for the common good of the community.

Under the Community Development Programme which now covers the entire State, there are now functioning 229 Blocks of which 99 are in Stage one, 100 in Stage two, 23 in post-second-stage and six are pre-Extension Blocks. Distribution of chemical fertilizers, better seeds, constructions of drains, culverts and roads, pavement of streets, and many other such development activities are the highlights of this programme. In the matter of public participation, people's contribution up to the 31st March, 1965, amounted to Rs. 19.50 crores as against Rs. 22.59 crores by the State Government. In order to ensure closer cooperation and coordination among the departments of Development and Panchayats, Agriculture and Cooperation, vast changes in the administrative set-up have been brought about and these departments placed under the overall charge of a Senior Officer designated as Commissioner for Agricultural Production and Rural Development. Similar coordinating committees have also been formed at District, Block and Panchayat levels to follow up the programme allotted at various levels more vigorously.

Important decisions have been taken at the recent conference at Srinagar of the State Ministers of Community Development and Panchayati Raj which will go a long way in effective implementation of development schemes prepared by Panchayati Raj institutions and prescribing of a criteria for efficiency in performance. Now when the Panchayati Raj has been fully established and the representatives of the rural people have the power to decide upon measures which would bring about improvement in all spheres of rural life, the goal of economic salvation for the masses has come a little nearer. Increasing the economic wealth of the people by drawing up village production plans, spread of literacy, improvement of the health of the people, improving community facilities and in general making life in the village fuller and richer for everyone is the task before Panchayats, and in this task they will be assisted with advice and service by officials of different departments. The success of our Plans depends entirely on the strength and vitality of the institutions of the Panchayati Raj, and there is every hope that they will come up to our expectations.

We must avoid any panic because that is bad at any time, and there is no reason for it. We have behind us the strength of a united nation. Let us rejoice because of this and apply it to the major task of today, which is preserving our complete freedom and integrity, and the removal of all those who commit aggression on India's sacred territory. Let us face this crisis not light-heartedly but with firm faith in the rightness of our struggle and confidence in its outcome.

—Jawaharlal Nehru



An adivasi staring at
which augurs

A Community-cum-Gram Panchayat building constructed through shramdan of the people of Rajgunj

COMMUNITY DEV

Like all other States in India, Bihar is also successfully implementing the Community Development programme. As time passes on more community buildings are appearing to dot the rural landscape in Bihar. Here we present a village, Rajgunj in Dhanbad district. The famous Grand Trunk Road passes by this progressive village. Rajgunj boasts of the educational facilities that it provides to its children—right from primary stage up to the Higher Secondary standard. Besides, there is a dispensary having facilities for indoor treatment and maternity. The village which was well known in ancient times for the valour of its people has once again come to

The photograph shows the Mukhiya and other Panches of Rajgunj Panchayat engaged in discussing village affairs.

udiyal irrigation project
days for him

Digging of canal in progress

OPMENT IN BIHAR

limelight for its rapid march to prosperity.

We also present Gobindpur, another village in Dhanbad district, where a major irrigation scheme is being implemented at an estimated cost of Rs. 26,94,600. About 12,000 acres of land will be irrigated after its completion.

An important implement of the sluice gate

A general view of the main dam and sluice already constructed under the major irrigation scheme at Gobindpur

RANGASWAMY—A MODEL FARMER

By Our Correspondent

IF YOU BY any chance come to Kurudampalayam, a small village in Coimbatore district of Madras, the people of the village will certainly show you the paddy field of Shri V. C. Rangaswamy.

"Who is he?" you will probably want to know.

"He is the best cultivator in this village," they will say in a chorus.

And that is a fact. Shri Rangaswamy is one of the progressive farmers in the country today. He has developed a farm where he employs improved agricultural practices. By dint of painstaking efforts he has in five years added four acres to his ten-acre farm.

Shri Rangaswamy has specialised in paddy cultivation. Last season he was able to get 8,248 lbs. of paddy from an acre. He narrowly missed the State award for the best crop as he did not register in time for the competition. The cost of cultivation works out to about Rs. 450 per acre and the yield from one acre plot has given him a net return of Rs. 750.

If you ask, Shri Rangaswamy would disclose with a smile that the secret of his success in paddy lies in the attention paid to seedlings at the nursery stage. Water supply to the nursery is suspended on the 15th and 30th days. This increases the tillering capacity of the seedlings, resulting in greater number of earheads and therefore a higher yield. In the field where these seedlings are transplanted not less than 50 tillers are observed for each hill. Then chemical fertilizers—100 lbs. of Ammonium Sulphate, 200 lbs. of Superphosphate and 30 lbs. of Potash—are applied.

Shri Rangaswamy believes in Japanese method of planting and has got the high yield by adopting it.

He grows sugarcane in the main season and the Adsali (*adi pattam*) season. He gets more than 50 tons of cane and once he was awarded at the village level competition for the highest yield of 56 tons.

Cholam is another crop raised in his farm. He got a yield of 3,175 lbs. and a net return of Rs. 497.50 per acre.

Shri Rangaswamy has great faith in green manures and raised nearly 6,000 Glyricidia plants and a large number of Ipomea plants also.

He takes much pains in preparing the soil. By his instinct he knows what should be done to make the soil yield better crops. Without any aid from soil science experts he has amended his soil well, adding to it what it lacks. As a result the soil has become responsive and produces what he wants.

Our country now requires farmers like Shri Rangaswamy, who would not stick to traditional practices of cultivation but with a progressive outlook take long strides towards self-sufficiency in food. Our farmers can play their most important role by freeing the country from dependence on food imports. Farmers like Shri Rangaswamy have shown the way and it is hoped their examples will be followed by other farmers with right earnestness.

SUCCESS OF SHRIRAM

K. S. PANDYA

WHEN I met Shriram he was discussing some problems with his brother Nanoolal. His neighbour Daryaosing with his brother Sangaram was also there. All of them had the honoured privilege to receive pugree from the hand of the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri D. P. Misra recently at the Panch Sammelan at Asta. Both Nanoolal and Gangaram are well known in the State for their tremendous success in sugarcane growing. They have won prizes in State as well as all-India level sugarcane growing competitions on more than one occasion.

But the purpose of my visit was to interview Shriram who had won the first prize in the State-level sugarcane growing competition this year.

"Namaste, Shriramji", I said.

"Namaste. Please have a seat", he said.

"I have come to congratulate you on your success, Shriramji", I said.

"Thank you. But I cannot claim any credit for my success", he replied modestly, "the entire credit goes to the eminent farmers present here." He introduced the other three persons already mentioned by me.

"Our village Hasanpura has built a glorious tradition of sugarcane production", continued Shriram. "Since 1960-61 our men are winning in all-India and State level competitions. Daryao Singh got prizes twice and Nanoolal and Gangaram thrice each in the all-India competition."

"Really, it is fascinating", I exclaimed.

"I must not speak much about my village. There are other villages in the district which are doing equally fine in this respect. For example, our neighbouring village Jamonia is progressing very rapidly. Gangaram of Jamonia has won the first prize in short duration crop competition on all-India level this year, by producing about 194 metric tons per hectare. He has been awarded a cash prize of Rs. 2,500 and a gold medal.

"That's why people are saying that Sehore and sugarcane go together", I interrupted.

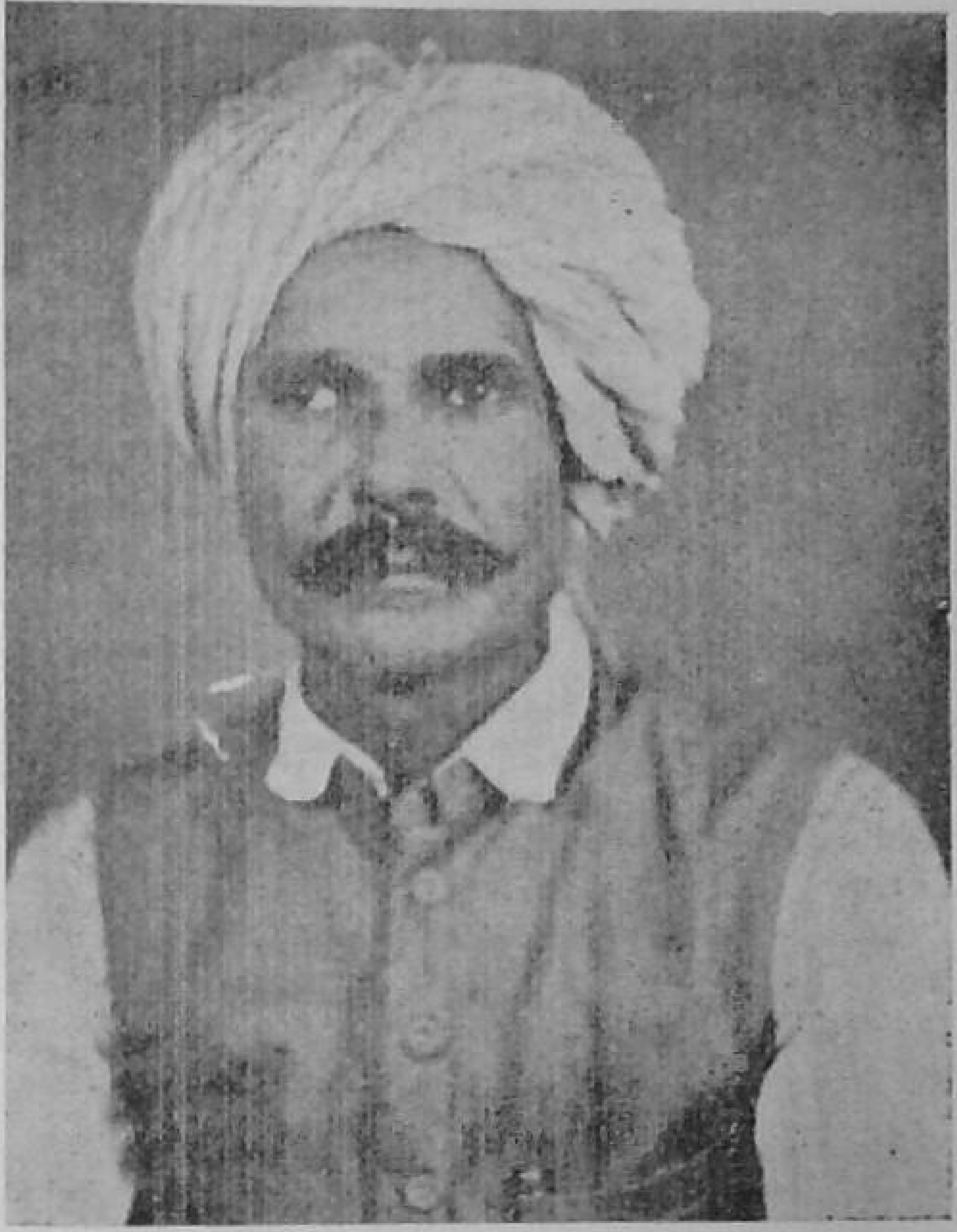
Shriram and others burst into laughter.

"You are right", said Shriram after a while. "Sehore district is actually blessed with a soil fit for sugarcane production. All that we are doing at Hasanpura is to adopt improved agricultural methods. Thanks to the enthusiastic village leaders like Gangaramji here, who is the Sarpanch of Thunakalan Panchayat, we always get the proper guidance. Moreover, the prizes—medals and cash—have encouraged all of us to produce more every year. We have vowed to win a prize every year in the all-India competition. Since 1960-61 we have done it so far and we will strive hard to maintain our position as top ranking sugarcane growers in the country." His face was lit with optimism.

"Hasanpura is already well marked in the map of sugarcane production in the country", I said.

"We want to do better", Shriram said emphatically. "Do you know how we do it?"

"I would love to", I replied.



Shri Shriram

"Well, at first the field has to be made ready. Unless you tend and nurse the soil well, it won't respond to your expectation. I tilled my land about five times and applied 25 cartloads of cowdung, five bags of Superphosphate and Ammonium sulphate and also green manures before sowing. When the seeds germinated regular watering was done. I saved the plants from insects by sprinkling insecticides. Cane growing, you see, requires constant efforts and sustained personal attention. Otherwise, germs and insects will do havoc."

"If I ever feel like growing sugarcane, I will come to you for advice", I said jokingly.

"No, not to me but to them," Shriram pointed at the three others. "From them we have learnt. Of course the prizes have gone a long way in creating enthusiasm. Shri Amarnath Singh, Assistant Director of Sugarcane and Shri Deshmukha, the Agricultural Officer first instigated us to take part in sugarcane growing competitions. The prizes were bagged by our villagers on their first appearance. This success created the necessary impetus for others to work hard and produce more."

Defence not only is the work of our brave soldiers at the front, but it means increasing our production greatly. In order to do this we have to use new methods of agriculture which will increase our production.—**Jawaharlal Nehru**

PACKAGE PROGRAMME IN CACHAR

CHINMOY NAG

"And he gave it for his opinion, that whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together".—JONATHAN SWIFT

THE 26TH OF JANUARY of the year 1963 will be remembered as a red-letter day in the calendar of Cachar district of Assam. On this august day, the Package Programme was launched in this district with a view to introducing modern scientific methods of cultivation to the farmers to convince them to switch over from less to more, old to new, tradition to science.

More than two years have elapsed since the Package Programme came to Cachar. It cannot be claimed that the Programme has done miracles in this disrict. But we must remember that the Programme has, to its credit, neither a magic wand nor Aladin's lamp. So far as the problems are concerned, Cachar is a type by itself.

The first phase of the Programme covered four Blocks, namely, Sonai, Lakhimpur, Ramkrishnanagar and Lala. Four more Blocks, Narshingpur, Badarpur, Hailakandi and Katlicherra, have come under this Programme this year. It is expected that the whole of Cachar district will be covered by the third year of the Programme. This, however, does not mean that no work is being done to improve the condition in Blocks other than these eight Package Blocks. Non-package Blocks have been utilising this time-lag towards an effective spade work.

A farmer is, by nature, conservative. In case of Cachar, the degree of conservatism seems to be a bit more. It is quite difficult to convince them of the utility of modern methods. But it is heartening that they are gradually parting from their traditional practices and accepting the new ones.

The district suffers from bad communications. It requires good roads to connect it well with other districts. The lack of good roads has adversely affected the marketing of its agro-industrial goods.

It is, however, too early to judge the impact of the programme within the short period it has run. The programme is not still equipped to withstand adverse weather condition or damaging economic factors like price changes. The administrative process is still to undergo various stages. The supporting organisations like the seed and soil testing laboratories, the implement workshops, the district information units etc. are all taking keen interest in the programme and are trying their best to make it successful because agriculture is the King Pin of Cachar's economic structure. More singularly, she has no way out of agriculture. Too little potentialities have blocked the way of lifting up her economy otherwise. Cachar is destined to live in agriculture and the Package programme has come to give it the necessary fillip. It is hoped that the people of Cachar would give up their old ideas and march forward to improve their economic lot.

We shall build up happy and prosperous villages, and every fellow countryman of ours will be cared for and will add to the wealth of the village and the country. We have to preserve our freedom and people's Raj and make this a larger co-operative enterprise.—**Jawaharlal Nehru**

A COMMENDABLE VENTURE

BIBHAS CHATTERJI

"YOUR VISIT to Hajo Block will remain incomplete without a study of the novel scheme for integrated services for child welfare." This remark of the Block Development Officer made me inquistive and curious about the scheme and even though the time at my disposal was very short, I could not resist the temptation of knowing something about it.

The scheme known as the Integrated Child Welfare Demonstration Project and sponsored by the Union Ministry of Education, was launched at Hajo Block on the 14th November, 1962. The primary object of this project, which is the first of its kind in Assam, is "to show that with limited resources, better results can be achieved through the willing cooperation and concerted efforts of government and voluntary welfare agencies. The idea is not to coordinate the existing services and facilities on child welfare which are rather insufficient but to build up integrated and comprehensive services to meet the total needs of all the children in a given area". It is a five-year programme with a total budget provision of Rs. 5 lakhs.

The main unit of the project is at Hajo with three sister units at Sualkuchi, Ramdia and Chechamukh. All the four units are housed in the buildings constructed previously by the Block for the welfare of women and children on the lands donated by the people. The buildings have now been extended to suit the requirements of the project. So far as the staffing pattern is concerned, there is one Chief Child Welfare Organiser and four organisers—two of whom are promoted from Gram Sevikas and two are direct recruits. The B.D.O., Hajo, acts as the Treasurer of the project and is the drawing and disbursing officer.

Since child welfare, in the widest sense of the term, is the concern of the project, its functions include opening of Balwadi centres, mid-day feeding of school children free of cost; health programmes for women and children by arranging visits to every village and school of qualified doctors for health examination and triple vaccination programme and holding women's camps for dissemination of knowledge on maternity and child care and family planning; arranging sports, recreational activities, children sammelans etc. The project also has within its programme of activities distribution of clothing and books to poor children on the certificate of Head Masters, improvement of sitting arrangements and construction of latrines in schools, distribution of books to libraries to the tune of Rs. 500 per annum, provision of playgrounds and childrens' parks, selection of handicapped children and arrangement for their proper training, organisation of girls' youth clubs etc.

On questioning the Chief it was learnt that the first two years of the project period were devoted to preparatory work because it took two complete years to convince the guardians. Moreover, recruitment of staff members was also delayed. The project has actually started its activities from the current year. And if one year's performance be any guide, the Chief is quite hopeful about the future of the scheme. In her opinion the Balwadis have already become very popular and there is an increasing demand for opening more Balwadis. Girls' Youth Clubs, at present four in number, are also proving successful in the sense that more and more girls are coming forward to learn crafts. The need for a craft teacher has already been felt and it has, therefore, been decided to provide a qualified lady craft teacher from this year to teach the girls. Since there is a growing demand for training in music and dance from these girls' clubs a music-*cum*-dance teacher is going to be appointed very soon. It was also learnt that the women are very much interested in attending family planning camps where board and lodging is arranged free of cost by the authorities. Three such camps have uptil now been organised in which 100 women participated. They evinced keen interest in the use of oral contraceptives which were distributed free of cost.

The objectives which inspire the project authorities are, no doubt, laudable and commendable. Since the children of to-day are the citizens of to-morrow, much depends on how the children are brought up to qualify for good citizenship. The contribution of women in this task of nation-building can hardly be gainsaid, for "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world". Hence, the project aims at integrated approach to child welfare which is inextricably woven round women welfare. In the words of the B.D.O., this is a "commendable venture" and should receive all attention it deserves as a pioneering endeavour in the task of building up the future of India.

Since the project has commenced its real functioning only from this year it would be too premature to pronounce any verdict, but in the opinion of the Chief who is an experienced and genuinely interested worker it has already made "a good start".

STORY OF SUALKUCHI

Where They Weave Poetry

A. B. DATTA

"GIVE ME a healthy cooperative and a healthy Panchayat and you will have both democracy and socialism guaranteed", said late Prime Minister Nehru. The village Sualkuchi in the District of Kamrup of Assam, some 50 kilometers from Gauhati, has both of them. A village almost girdled by the river Brahmaputra, Sualkuchi is the pride of rural Assam, where Gandhiji once set his feet, and is reported to have said, with a feeling of admiration for the silk weavers of the village, "They weave poetry". Indeed so excellent is their silk weaving that one has only to see and wonder, and wonder and see again. They also turn out the finest pieces of muga which command an assured market in the towns and cities of India. Most of the families in the village own their looms where they work. The children at times join too.

Sualkuchi bears distinctive signs of a well-to-do village. It is like a model village set in a picture frame. The hamlets line up in symmetry on either side of the road stretching far. A visitor every where in his round comes across villagers happy and gay. He will never miss also the rhythmic "click clock" of the looms at work in tune with the river Brahmaputra that flows nearby.

The villagers are happy and gay. They are economically well-off, and socially well knit. The weaving families earn decent living by the honest sweat of their brow. Their living is simple. Their hospitality is proverbial. The skill of the artisans is traditional.

This happy life would not have come to the people of Sualkuchi had they not learnt to live in cooperation. The artisans of Sualkuchi had also the vicissitudes of fortune. The cooperatives then came to their rescue. Left to them, it would have been hard to withstand the onslaught of time. But the cooperatives have helped them to keep to their moorings. The ten weaver's cooperatives in the village are functioning splendidly, catering to all their needs. The societies provide looms, accessories and loans to the members. Not a weaver is there who is not a member of a cooperative. The societies are doing a good business. They have set up sale points in towns and cities. The artisans of Sualkuchi have cast in their lot with the cooperatives. They stand for the cooperatives and the cooperatives stand for them.

FOUR PANCHAYATS

The village Sualkuchi with its population of some sixteen thousand has formed four Panchayats. The four Panchayats are like four wheels of a chariot. They all are attuned to the same purpose *i.e.* development of the community. For local works they function as four regional bodies. But for community work of the village as a whole they collaborate and jointly strive. Thus the Panchayats have great sway over the people who again have equally great emotional attachment for them. They have tremendous faith in the leadership provided by the Panchayats. The works of the Panchayats are multifold—communication, education, sanitation and improved agricultural practices and so on. The financial resources of the Panchayats may be meagre, but not their enthusiasm. The manpower is there which is mobilised as needs be. Splendid community works have been done through shramdan.

Sualkuchi pays utmost attention to education. In a single village, they have set up eight Primary schools with 3,000 students enrolled. There are two High Schools for boys and one for girls in the same village. A degree college has also come up. The people of the village have been able to build all these because they have the required will and determination.

The village Sualkuchi is thus forging ahead. The cooperatives ensure economic prosperity and the Panchayats better cohesion and stability. No wonder, Sualkuchi has become the cynosure of neighbouring eyes.

We are fighting today not for a piece of territory but for fundamental principles. . . . We are resisting a military dictatorship, a controlled press and a theocratic state. We believe in freedom even for those who think differently from us. The interest of democracy demands our victory, otherwise the lamp of freedom will go out in Asia. —**S. Radhakrishnan**

FROM HERE AND THERE

LIFE INSURANCE IN RURAL AREAS

THE UNION MINISTRY of Community Development and Cooperation has urged State Governments to make a systematic and selective effort for the promotion of life insurance business in rural areas through cooperative societies and Panchayati Raj institutions. It is pointed out that one of the declared objects of nationalising life insurance is to carry the gospal of insurance to the hitherto neglected rural areas.

It is also necessary to make life insurance popular in rural areas so that it comes to be accepted eventually as a security superior to the traditional forms of savings. Apart from the savings aspect, life insurance has a great sociological significance in creating in the rural people a modern attitude towards savings and work. In this, cooperative societies, wherever they are strong and viable, can play a significant role. Indeed, this can also be an additional source of regular income for cooperative institutions.

The insurance rules have already been modified to enable cooperatives and Panchayats to take out licences and act as agents.

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VANAMAHOTSAVA IN C.D. BLOCKS

THE GOVERNMENT of India have decided to present from this year, improved agricultural implements worth Rs. 500, Rs. 300 and Rs. 200 annually to the first three Community Development Blocks whose efforts at the plantations during the Vanamahotsava are adjudged to be the best in the whole country.

At present, the Union Government is awarding four Vanamahotsava rotating shields, every year, to the best district, best village, best institution and best university.

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BEST GRAM SEVAK

SHRI ARJUNLAL Tiwari of Belodi village in Pallari Block has been adjudged the best Gram Sevak for the year 1963-64 in the Raipur district (M.P.) competition.

Shri Tiwari made steady efforts and achieved outstanding progress, particularly in the fields of agriculture, veterinary and cooperation. Aged 31, Shri Tiwari made concerted efforts to popularise improved agricultural practices in all the six villages of his circle. As a result of his efforts, oil seeds cultivation was started in the circle for the first time and area under improved cultivation and double cropping increased appreciably. Use of chemical fertilizers also went up. One hundred and twenty-five quintals of improved paddy seed were supplied to the cultivators, 988 acres of additional land were brought under improved cultivation, 16 kharif and 2 rabi demonstration plots were laid. Further, cultivators were told about the improved methods of farming. People's contribution worth Rs. 10,000 was secured for various development works.

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DONATION FOR SCHOOL BUILDING

PEOPLE OF Madanpur village of Kharsiya Development Block in Raigarh district of Madhya Pradesh, are taking keen interest for educational progress of the area. A young village leader Shri Anant Ram Kewat, resident of the village, who was elected unopposed during the last Panchayat elections as Panch has donated Rs. 2,000 for construction of a school-building.

The people of the village emulating the example set by Shri Anant Ram have collected an amount of Rs. 750 for installing a hand pump in the school compound.

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TRIBAL WOMAN'S DONATION

SMT. JANNI GANGU, of village Dandabadu of Ananthagiri Panchayat Samiti in Andhra Pradesh has donated 10 acres of land to the Samiti for the construction of its office building, staff quarters and a primary health centre. Smt. Gangu, who comes of the local tribe, has thus set a noble example before all. She is herself poor and has lost her husband recently. She is, no doubt, one of them who place the cause of the country above self. Smt. Gangu has made this sacrifice so that this Tribal Development Block may forge ahead. Her donation will ever be remembered by the tribals inhabiting this Block with respect and gratitude.

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ELECTRICITY COMES TO VILLAGES

KITHA AND Jariyari villages in Ramnagar Development Block of Santa district of Madhya Pradesh were electrified from August 15, 1965.

During the year 1965-66, electrification work will be reaching the stage of completion in villages Nayagaon and Khutha in Raghurajnagar tahsil, Rahiqwara in Nagod Tahsil and Jura in Maihar tahsil.

In addition to this, six electric pumps were also installed at village Shankerpur in Raipur Baghelan Development Block at an expenditure of Rs. 15,000.

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COOP. MOVEMENT IN RAIPUR BLOCK

ALL THE villages of Raipur (Dharsiwa) Block of Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh have now been covered by the cooperative movement. More than 53

per cent of village families of the Block have been brought under the cooperative fold. A two-ton modern cooperative rice mill is being set up in Raipur at a cost of Rs. 25 lakhs. Proposed to be completed in 1966, it would almost revolutionise the agricultural economy of the Chhatisgarh region.

There are 41 Rural Cooperative Societies, three better farming societies, and one large sized credit society functioning in the Block at present. In 1958 the membership of credit societies was 3,916 which has now increased to 7,544. The share capital, too, has increased from Rs. 45,000 in 1957-58 to Rs. 2,30,000 in the current year.

The three rural marketing societies working in the Block marketed goods worth Rs. 15,000 during a short period of two months and a half. Opening of three more such societies in near future has been envisaged. Besides, three societies have purchased improved agricultural and plant protection implements which are hired to farmers on easy rates.

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SADHUS ORGANISE SHRAMDAN

SADHUS LIVING in three villages of the Raigarh Panchayat Samiti of Alwar district of Rajasthan have set a worthy example by organising and accomplishing shramdan valued at Rs. 8,000.

The Naga Sadhu of Dhigawara and the sadhus of Behali sponsored the digging of village ponds—johars—in their respective villages, while Baba Shuamdas of old Rajgarh could get a four-furlong road constructed through the villagers' shramdan.

Local villagers who respect these sadhus, spontaneously responded to their call for shramdan.

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STRENGTHENING OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

A SUM OF Rs. 15.63 crores has been placed at the disposal of the Panchayat Samitis in Rajasthan for implementing various development schemes transferred to them during the current financial year.

The highest priority has been given to the agricultural programmes on which Rs. 495.54 lakhs will be spent during the year as against Rs. 232.67 lakhs allotted last year.

For education a sum of Rs. 452.55 lakhs has been allotted this year while only Rs. 388.80 lakhs were spent during last year.

A sum of Rs. 55 lakhs has been earmarked for local development works and pilot projects scheme for utilization of idle rural manpower, while Rs. 338.40 lakhs have been allotted under the heads Community Development and National Extension Services.

About Rs. 60.10 lakhs have been provided for social services. Rs. 5 lakhs have been earmarked for granting taccavi loans while Rs. 15 lakhs will be spent on minor irrigation schemes.

A sum of Rs. 36 lakhs has been given as grant-in-aid to Panchayats while Rs. 6 lakhs have been sanctioned as grant-in-aid to 26 Zila Parishads.

Panchayat Samitis will get Rs. 42.18 lakhs as a share of land revenue.

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TRAINING FOR SELECTED GRAM SEVAKS

UNDER THE 'crash programme' for agricultural development in Rajasthan, a batch of 50 selected Gram Sevaks will undergo a job orientation training in agriculture this year.

The one-year orientation training will provide opportunity to the trainees to perform actual Extension work in the villages and also to go through a number of job orientated or problem solving exercises.

The existing Gram Sevak Training Centre at Sawaimadhopur has been selected for the purpose.

The trainee Gram Sevaks will be posted in the areas selected for the Intensive Agricultural programmes popularly known as Package Programmes.

Selection of Gram Sevaks for this training has been made by a special technical committee at the State level.

The selected Gram Sevaks will be given a stipend of Rs. 60 per month in addition to their usual salaries during the training period.

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DEPOSITS IN COOP. BANKS

THE MAHARASHTRA State Cooperative Bank and the 25 district central cooperative banks in the State held deposits amounting to Rs. 95.22 crores at the end of the cooperative year on June 30, 1965. The target of deposits fixed at Rs. 95 crores for the Third Five Year Plan has thus been exceeded even before the end of the Plan period.

This is the highest amount deposited in these cooperative banks in any one year so far. These deposits recorded an increase of 15 per cent over those of the previous year when deposits totalled Rs. 82.57 crores.

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QUARTERS FOR WOMEN TEACHERS

THE GOVERNMENT of Uttar Pradesh has accorded sanction for construction of 295 quarters for women teachers of the Senior Basic Schools situated in the rural areas of the State.

These quarters costing Rs. 7,37,500 at the rate of Rs. 2,500 per quarter, shall belong to local bodies and shall be maintained by them.

In all 510 quarters costing Rs. 12,75,000 have already been constructed for these women teachers.

TOWARDS A BETTER TOMORROW

The Village Volunteer Force is the "Army" of the people engaged in the defence of the country. The V.V.F. was inaugurated following the Chinese aggression in October 1962. The call for its mobilisation has once again gone out from the Union Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation to all the States during Pakistani attack against India.

The rural people have spontaneously responded to the demands created by the national emergency and are enrolling in the V.V.F. by their thousands. These volunteers are not only undertaking civil defence work, but also taking part in rural development works. The photograph shows members of the V.V.F. of Bourenpet village in the Hyderabad district of Andhra Pradesh, helping the farmers in the field.

Homeward bound

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